

# HEADWATERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI

## PRE CRUISE SOUTHBOUND CITY STAY PACKAGE

DATES: AUGUST 13, 2016 – AUGUST 15, 2016

### CITY STAY PACKAGE SUMMARY:

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk across the Mississippi River headwaters at Lake Itasca. Embark on an unforgettable journey that spans the entire length of the mighty Mississippi River! This distinctively inclusive Pre-Cruise City Stay Package brings guests to the birthplace of the Mississippi River, Lake Itasca. Glacier-created and spring-replenished, Lake Itasca is a breathtaking body of water that feeds our nation's largest river. Enjoy a full-day adventure on shore and on the water of the lake, local cuisine and expert guides to lead the way. This inclusive package includes a two-night hotel stay, transportation, local meals and knowledgeable guides.

### CITY STAY PACKAGE INCLUSIONS:

- Airport to Hotel Transfer
- Two Night Stay at the Courtyard by Marriott in St. Cloud
- Breakfast (2), Lunch (1), Dinner (1)
- Luxury Motorcoach tour from St. Cloud to Itasca State Park (Headwaters of the Mississippi River)
- Guided Boat Tour of Lake Itasca onboard the Chester Charles II
- Tour of Itasca State Park Narrated by Park Ranger
- Lunch at the Historic Douglas Lodge Headwaters Cafe
- Local Dinner at Jack and Jim's Restaurant
- *American Queen* Premium Pre-Cruise Tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Transfer to the *American Queen*

### THREE DAY CITY STAY PACKAGE ITINERARY:

#### DAY ONE:

12:00 PM – 4:00 PM – Arrive at Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport \*  
4:00 PM – Transfer to the Courtyard by Marriott in St. Cloud, Minnesota \*  
7:30 PM – Arrive at the Courtyard by Marriott and enjoy dinner and St. Cloud at your leisure

#### DAY TWO:

6:30 AM – 7:30 AM – Full American Breakfast in hotel  
7:30 AM – Motorcoach departs for Itasca State Park and the Mississippi Headwaters  
10:00 AM – Arrive at Itasca State Park  
10:30 AM – Guided tour on the waters of Lake Itasca onboard the *Chester Charles II* Paddleboat  
12:30 AM – Lunch at the historic Douglas Lodge's *Headwaters Cafe*  
1:30 PM – Motorcoach tour of Itasca State park with expert narration by an Itasca Park Ranger including several stops for picturesque photo stops at Preachers Grove, Peace Pipe Vista and the Mississippi Headwaters  
3:00 PM – Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk across the Mississippi River!  
4:30 PM – Depart Itasca State Park  
7:00 PM – Local Cuisine Dinner at Jack and Jim's Restaurant  
9:00 PM – Arrive back at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel after a long day of adventure!

#### DAY THREE:

6:30 AM – 7:15 AM – Full American Breakfast at the hotel  
7:30 AM – Depart for a St. Paul, Minnesota  
9:00 AM – Arrive at the Doubletree St. Paul Downtown Hotel and check-in for your American Queen Voyage  
10:00 AM – Begin a guided St. Paul, Minnesota City Tour. Time for lunch on your own will be included in this tour.  
3:30 PM – Arrive at the dock of the beautiful *American Queen* to continue your voyage down the Mississippi River.

*\*Note: Guests who arrive earlier in the day and do not wish to wait at the airport for the transfer, can take a taxi to the Radisson Blu at Mall of America hotel where the bellmen will happily store your luggage safely so that you can explore the Mall of America while awaiting your transfer to St. Cloud. The motorcoach will make a stop at this hotel at 4:30 PM.*

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### HEADWATERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI CITY STAY PACKAGE FULL DESCRIPTION

#### DAY 1

Welcome to the beautiful state of Minnesota! If you're arriving at the Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport, you will be greeted by an American Queen Representative who will guide guests to the luxury motorcoach transfer to the Courtyard St. Cloud by Marriott. After your check-in, spend the remainder of the evening independently exploring the intriguing city of St. Cloud, enjoying the shops, attractions, and restaurants all within walking distance from your hotel.

#### DAY 2

Today, we head north to the headwaters of the Mighty Mississippi River! Fuel up for a day of exploration with an included full American breakfast at the hotel, beginning at 6:30 AM. Then, meet at 7:30 as our luxury motorcoach begins the journey to Lake Itasca.

Sit back and soak in the beautiful scenery on this two-and-a-half hour ride through northern Minnesota. Watch as farmlands stretch far into the distance, disappearing into the horizon, giving way to massive old-growth pine tree forests that are native to this region.

As we arrive at Itasca State Park, we'll make a stop at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center, Museum and Giftshop. This is the perfect opportunity to stretch your legs, use the restroom, and get a sampling of what the rest of the day holds.

The adventure continues on the *Chester Charles II*, a 141-passenger vessel that will transport our group across the waters of Lake Itasca. Listen as our expert guide explains the importance of this freshwater lake that feeds into one of America's most historic and powerful rivers, the Mighty Mississippi.

Along the way, our knowledgeable captain will make certain to bring our attention to native wildlife, including ospreys, whitetail deer, blue herons, beavers, and otters. The most impressive sight, though, is seeing the bald eagle (US national emblem) and the common loon (Minnesota state bird) as both can be seen swooping through the sky.

As we return to dry land, our journey continues at the Douglas Lodge. This rustic lodge, built of tall timbers and natural materials, is home to the Headwaters Café, where we will enjoy a delicious lunch. Savor the flavors of northern Minnesota cuisine, as selections of trout, walleye, fresh berries, and grains overflow the menu.

After our meal, an Itasca State Park ranger will join us aboard the motorcoach for an informative driving tour of the park. Enjoy the ride as we explore Lake Itasca, discovering the historical significance and changes within the park through the years. Brief stops at Preachers Grove and Peace Pipe Vista afford picturesque views of the lake through the 100-year-old-pines and hardwood trees, including Minnesota's largest white pine tree, measuring a staggering 55 feet in diameter!

As the informative tour of Itasca State Park comes to an end, a final stop brings us to the Mississippi Headwaters—the beginning of this vital river that winds through 2,552 miles of the United States, completing its journey at the Gulf of Mexico. Visit the Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center to discover more about this area. Browse the gift shop to choose a souvenir to remember our adventure and enjoy some ice cream at the café!

For those who would like to, we invite you to walk the short path to see where the Mississippi begins its journey. (*The walk to the headwaters is about 600 feet along a level, stone road.*) Dip your toes in the water, soak in the sun and walk across the Mississippi River, America's largest and most influential river! Before leaving, make sure to check out the massive Mississippi River map outlining all the connected river towns, as a reminder of its sheer size.

On our trek back to St. Cloud, we will travel through the Brainerd Lakes region, teeming with views of beautiful freshwater lakes and wildlife. Sit back and relax until we arrive at Jack & Jim's restaurant, a Minnesota experience not to be missed. Try a "fish fry" (a Minnesota tradition) or enjoy steak, fresh seafood, ribs, and salad bar as the perfect conclusion to our truly adventurous day!

#### DAY 3

Today, enjoy an included full American breakfast before departing for the day. Our journey continues as we tour the rural roads of Minnesota on our way to Saint Paul, where, after a brief check-in for your *American Queen* voyage at the Doubletree St. Paul Downtown Hotel, we will embark on a guided American Queen Premium city tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. Hear the story behind historic, unique buildings and learn about people who shaped the city. We'll see local sites and attractions, and discover the culture and customs of this region as well as a free time for lunch on your own.

As the tour comes to a close, the motorcoach will then transport us to Red Wing, Minnesota where the *American Queen* will be waiting to continue our adventure down the Mighty Mississippi River!